

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 077251
ORIGIN NEA-07

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S/S:MR. BRIDGES

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 077251

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: CALL BY INDIAN AMBASSADOR ON DEPUTY SECRETARY

1. SUMMARY: BEFORE LEAVING FOR CONSULTATIONS INDIAN AMBASSADOR KEWAL SINGH CALLED ON DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER APRIL 4. BOTH AGREED THAT PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS WERE GOOD. CHRISTOPHER SAID WE WOULD BE COMING TO THE INDIANS SHORTLY ON TARAPUR AND ASKED FOR CLARIFICATION ON PRIME MINISTER DESAI'S STATEMENT ON NUCLEAR TESTING. CHRISTOPHER ALSO SAID WE WERE MINDFUL OF INDIAN CONCERNS ON A-7S AS WE BEGAN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PAKISTANIS ON THEIR NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANS. END SUMMARY.

2. BILATERAL RELATIONS. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY EXPRESSED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 077251

OUR APPRECIATION FOR THE WARM REPLY FROM PRIME MINISTER DESAI TO THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE. AMBASSADOR SINGH NOTED THE PRIME MINISTER'S BELIEF THAT INDO-U.S. RELATIONS SHOULD BE WARMER AND CLOSER. WHILE INDIA ALREADY HAD AN EXTENSIVE RANGE OF RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., THE AMBASSADOR THOUGHT THESE COULD BE EXPANDED. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY AGREED THAT RELATIONS ARE GOOD BUT CAN

IMPROVE FURTHER.

3. CHRISTOPHER SAID THAT WE FOUND THE INDIAN ELECTORAL PROCESS DEEPLY REASSURING AS A DEMONSTRATION OF DEMOCRACY AT WORK. WE WERE NOT FOR ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER BUT FOR THE PROCESS. WE THOUGHT CREDIT WAS OWED TO THE LOSERS AS WELL AS THE WINNERS. KEWAL SINGH SAID THAT INDIA WOULD REMAIN NONALIGNED BUT WOULD FOLLOW A QTE GENUINELY UNQTE NONALIGNED PATH.

4. NONPROLIFERATION/TARAPUR. NOTING THE PRESIDENT'S DEEP INTEREST IN NONPROLIFERATION QUESTIONS, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY REFERRED TO PRIME MINISTER DESAI'S PUBLIC COMMENT ON NUCLEAR TESTING. THE USG WOULD WELCOME ANY CLARIFICATION THE AMBASSADOR COULD BRING BACK AFTER HIS CONSULTATIONS AS THIS WAS A SUBJECT WE FOLLOWED WITH QTE INTENSE UNQTE INTEREST, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY STATED.

5. ON TARAPUR, CHRISTOPHER SAID THAT WE ARE NEARING THE DECISION STAGE ON OVERALL NUCLEAR POLICY QUESTIONS AND WOULD PROBABLY ANNOUNCE DOMESTIC DECISIONS LATER IN THE WEEK. WE EXPECTED TO BE COMING TO THE INDIANS IN THE NEAR FUTURE ON THE TARAPUR ISSUE. KEWAL SINGH RESPONDED THAT HE WAS SURE INDIA WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE PRESIDENT'S FEELINGS ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS QUESTIONS AND WOULD WELCOME OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCUSS BROAD NUCLEAR ISSUES. WHILE SUCH TALKS WENT FORWARD, THE AMBASSADOR HOPED THAT SOMETHING COULD BE DONE QUICKLY ABOUT THE TARAPUR FUEL SUPPLY PROBLEM AND ALSO THE SHORTAGE OF CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 077251

STORAGE CAPACITY. THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED THAT DELAY IN MOVING AHEAD WITH THE PENDING LICENSE FOR FUEL WOULD CREATE CONSIDERABLE STIR IN THE INDIAN PRESS AND POLITICAL ARENA. DUBS COMMENTED THAT WE PLAN TO SEND AN EXPERT TO INDIA ON THE STORAGE PROBLEM IN THE NEXT WEEK OR TWO.

6. PAKISTAN: THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID THAT, AS INDICATED PREVIOUSLY BY SECRETARY VANCE, THE U.S. WAS AWARE OF INDIAN SENSITIVITIES REGARDING THE SALE OF A-7S TO PAKISTAN. WE WOULD SHORTLY BE STARTING CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PAKISTANIS. DURING THESE TALKS WE WOULD KEEP IN MIND INDIAN CONCERNS ABOUT A-7S. KEWAL SINGH SAID HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR THESE REMARKS. THE SALE OF A-7S TO PAKISTAN WOULD BE A MATTER OF QTE VERY GREAT CONCERN UNQTE TO INDIA. IT WOULD CAUSE THE NEW DESAI GOVERNMENT TO FACE PROBLEMS FROM WHICH IT SHOULD BE SPARED AT THIS STAGE. INDIA AND PAKISTAN HAD MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS TOWARD NORMALIZATION

OF RELATIONS BUT THE SUPPLY OF SUCH SOPHISTICATED
WEAPONRY AS A-7S WHICH INDIA COULD NOT PRESENTLY
MATCH WOULD BE A QTE TERRIBLE SETBACK UNQTE TO
THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS.

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